

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2011-16
UPDATE 4/5: 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the fourth update document for the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016. The purpose of the document is to inform members, officers and partners on how the strategic housing objectives we established in 2011 have been met. A copy of the update document is attached as Appendix 1 and the Delivery Plan as Appendix 2.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The adopted Housing and Homelessness Strategy provides the council's strategic approach to housing over a five-year period, 2011-2016. The strategy covers all areas of the housing service through four themes:

- Housing supply and delivering good quality housing
- Homelessness and homelessness prevention
- Meeting the needs of specific groups
- Supporting neighbourhoods and housing standards

- 2.2 Each of the four strategic themes has a set of delivery objectives, it shows how the objectives are measured and reports the progress made. The Delivery Plan is the working document for the Housing Service and generates workloads and performance monitoring information for each team. The update document provides a narrative on the councils approach to delivering the Strategy and records key achievements.

3 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2014/15

- 3.1
- During the year, 361 new homes in total were delivered in the borough with 149 of these being affordable homes.
 - Building work has started at Wellesley to deliver the first of 3850 new homes to include 1347 affordable homes.
 - We have secured 19 units of affordable housing for Rushmoor residents at Sun Park, a cross boundary scheme in partnership with Hart District Council
 - New partnership work with Stoll and Haig Homes is allowing us to develop an accommodation pathway for Armed forces Veterans
 - A capital budget of £204,000 is in place to support the delivery of new homes.
 - Capital Grant funding was made available to Sentinel HA to secure 5 family homes for affordable rent in the borough under the Existing Satisfactory Property (ESP) initiative.
 - Right to Buy receipts of £302,000 have supported the First Wessex regeneration scheme at North Town.

- A new partnership with Oak Housing Ltd has allowed the conversion of an empty MOD building into 45 units of temporary accommodation, including 2 wheelchair accessible units and funded in part by £500,000 of Homes and Communities Agency Empty Homes Grant.
- An additional 7 empty homes were brought back into use in the borough.
- A disused, brownfield council owned site was disposed of to the charity Seeability, providing a capital receipt of £150,000 to the council with plans approved for the development of 12 specialist units of accommodation for people with visual impairment and learning disabilities.
- The use of local letting plans to address under occupation facilitated 5 family homes being made available for affordable rent.
- The Aldershot Winter Night Shelter, run by The Vine, achieved an award for Excellent Practice by Housing Justice and helped 23 people access basic accommodation and support from November 2014 - March 2015

4 Evaluating how we have met our strategic objectives

4.1 Throughout the life of the strategy, there have been significant political, economic and social changes, which the housing team and its partners have had to take into account in delivering our strategic housing objectives. Section Two of the update document; provides a summary of how we have delivered on each of our objectives.

The strategy objectives and delivery plan will be reviewed for the final time at the end of 2015/16.

4.1 Objectives that have been challenging to deliver:

- Maintaining housing supply has been a challenge, we have experienced a shortfall of 169 affordable homes delivering 431 to date out of our target of 600 units over the strategy period, due largely to challenging housing market conditions. The bulk of the housing supply has been delivered at the Strategic Housing Sites.
- Increasing demand for homelessness advice and assistance has remained challenging throughout the strategy period with 500-700 households accessing the service each year.
- It had been difficult to place people into suitable temporary accommodation, which resulted in 344 families being placed into Bed and Breakfast since 2011.
- Supporting People funding cuts has reduced the availability of specialist housing support. This has impacted significantly on those with lower support needs e.g. those with tenancy support needs.
- Energy Efficiency Grants have been cut nationally, impacting on our ability to assist people in this area.

Objectives we have performed well at:

4.2 • A total of 83 empty properties have been brought back into use without the need for enforcement action, we have used voluntary negotiation in

all cases.

- Innovative partnership working and different funding models have delivered the Aldershot Winter Night Shelter and 45 units of temporary accommodation at Clayton Court.
- New homes have good housing standards, with North Town delivering units to Lifetime Homes and Sustainable Code Level 4, Wellesley will deliver to Lifetime Homes standards.
- Proactive work by the Private Sector Housing Team is improving relationships with property owners and landlords and they have responded to 99% of all complaints about housing conditions within 3 days.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications for the Housing Strategy Update.

6 Conclusion

6.1 This fourth update of the 2011-2016 Housing and Homelessness Strategy illustrates the successes and challenges the Housing Team have experienced in delivering the council's strategic housing objectives set out in 2011. Despite a challenging economic environment and a changing political background, we have been able to achieve the main objectives we were set over the last four years. We have worked successfully with partners to overcome key challenges for some of our most vulnerable residents, such as the supply of temporary accommodation and the Winter Night Shelter. Our target of delivery of 150 affordable homes per year has not been achieved; however, an average of 108 per year in a highly challenging economic environment is a fair outcome.

6.2 The impending Housing Bill and Conservative Government's Housing Strategy will affect every area of the housing services e.g. the delivery and funding of affordable housing schemes and the way in which we allocate affordable housing. As we look to the next 5 years we will need to work closely and creatively with partner organisations, members and customers to ensure our response remains strategic, proactive and fair; ensuring that residents continue to receive the right support and advice to be able to access good quality and well managed accommodation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Panel approve the update document so it can be published.

Qamer Yasin
Head of Environmental Health and Housing
